

MINUTES
CITY OF WOODSTOCK
ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION
September 2, 2021

The Regular Meeting of the City of Woodstock Environmental Commission was called to order by Chair Erica Poremba at 5:30 PM on Thursday, September 2, 2021.

1. CALL TO ORDER

2. ROLL CALL

COMMISSION MEMBERS ATTENDING: Ed Ellinghausen, Laurie Kacmar, M. Schneemann, Steve Wenzel and Chair Erica Poremba.

COMMISSION MEMBERS ABSENT: none.

STAFF ATTENDING: Public Works Department Director Christina Betz and Executive Assistant/Chief Deputy City Clerk Jane Howie.

OTHERS PRESENT: Ms. Cindy Skrukrud, Environmental Defenders of McHenry County; Mr. Scott Kuykendall, Water Resources Specialist with McHenry County Planning & Development.

3. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES:

Motion by S. Wenzel, second by E. Ellinghausen to accept the Minutes from the July 1, 2021 meeting. Ayes: E. Ellinghausen, L. Kacmar, M. Schneemann, S. Wenzel and Chair E. Poremba. Nays: None. Absentees: none. Abstentions: None. Motion carried. Minutes accepted with correction

Motion by L. Kacmar, second by S. Wenzel to accept the Minutes from the August 5, 2021 meeting. Ayes: E. Ellinghausen, L. Kacmar, M. Schneemann, S. Wenzel and Chair E. Poremba. Nays: None. Absentees: none. Abstentions: None. Motion carried. Minutes accepted with correction

4. FLOOR DISCUSSION

- a. Public Comment: None.
- b. Commission Comment: None.

5. TRANSMITTALS (no discussion or action requested)

- a. 2021 SeedMoney Challenge Grant Information

6. ITEMS OF BUSINESS

a. Guest Speaker: Cindy Skrukrud. Topic: Environmental Defenders Initiatives
Ms. Skrukrud said she Chairs the Environmental Defenders water group. She was here this evening to talk about two projects. Ms. Skrukrud shared a presentation about types of pollinators, the importance of pollinators in the ecosystem, reasons why monarch butterflies are so important, and the monarch butterfly's population decline due to many types of losses. Ms. Skrukrud also shared ways of improving habitat and conditions for monarchs. She explained that Illinois is a key state included in the eastern migration of monarch butterflies and she explained what is involved in

the Illinois Monarch Project. Ms. Skrukrud asked if the City of Woodstock would be willing to sign the Illinois Monarch Project Pledge to become part of this project. She explained that part of the project includes planting milkweed stems to encourage caterpillars to live in the area. In addition, The Land Conservancy manages sales of milkweed stems. Ms. Skrukrud added that there are grants available from Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation to assist with this program.

Ms. Skrukrud continued on to explain what's involved with the National Wildlife Federation's Mayors' Monarch Pledge, which includes pledging for at least three action items. She said beginning in December each year, Mayors can pledge for the following year. It was noted that the City already has a couple of pollinator gardens. The Defenders are reaching out to towns and cities in the hopes of getting more communities involved. S. Wenzel opined that he'd like to see this Commission get together and recommend this project and pledge to Mayor Turner. This is a huge effort to get more milkweeds planted in rights of ways and throughout communities. Nancy, a guest in the audience, said Farmers are planting areas specifically for pollinator gardens. Illinois is part of the Mid-America Monarch Conservation Strategy. 150 Million milkweed stems are needed by 2038. E. Ellinghausen said decades ago milkweed was despised by farmers because it's toxic to animals. However, caterpillar systems have adjusted and makes the caterpillars toxic to their predators. Nancy said she is concerned with mosquito spraying as that kills other insects as well, such as pollinators. There was a consensus by the Commission to recommend this program/project to the Mayor and City Council. C. Betz agreed to write up a Staff Report and Proclamation.

Scott Kuykendall suggested that the City of Woodstock should also pursue ComEd's Green Region Grant; however, you have to have a match with this one. C. Betz said she will talk with the City's Grant Writer about this grant. S. Wenzel suggested rehabilitating two areas in town that already have seedbanks; one by Route 14 and the the other by Kunes (Benoy).

Mr. Kuykendall mentioned another program that installs signage for watersheds, which helps to raise awareness of water bodies. He said the Environmental Defenders worked on a grant with McHenry County Division of Transportation in collaboration. This signage, mostly on country roads, will help to raise awareness for residents about their waterways and watersheds. Mr. Kuykendall said they are working on Phase 2, they've received grant funding for Phase 1. The next grant submission is due by the end of October. C. Betz added that the City has two bridges; however, one is more of a box culvert than an official bridge. Mr. Kuykendall said the only cost is for the employees to install the sign. He encouraged the City to work with the Environmental Defenders to get involved in the next grant cycle; it's a commitment with a significant payback. Chair Poremba suggested that the City get involved in this project, as well; there was a consensus by all Commissioners. It was mentioned that this program helped the County reach their MS4 compliance.

Mr. Kuykendall continued on to talk about a water resources plan for the county. He said there is an online document that is bookmarked so that you can quickly get to what you're looking for. He offered to come back next month to share additional information which he'd like to get out to the general public.

b. Grant Opportunity for Community Gardens. 2021 SeedMoney Challenge

S. Wenzel said this year's cycle is approaching, and groups can apply again even if they've received money before. He mentioned that this is a match program. E. Poremba said they would

like to extend the garden and plant some milkweed. S. Wenzel said perhaps a pollinator garden could be constructed in the cleared, available space. E. Poremba liked the idea of the pollinator garden. There was a suggestion to clear ten more beds and space for a pollinator garden. S. Wenzel said he recently visited Merryman Fields Park with the thought of it being a site for a future community garden. Commissioners agreed that they'd like to wait until 2022 to recommend an additional garden site to the City Council.

c. Project Lead the Way Presentation Re-Cap –

There was a bit of discussion about this program. Commissioners will discuss this further at a future meeting.

d. Environmental Master Plan

This topic will be discussed at a future Commission meeting.

7. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

- a. Dark Sky Initiative
- b. Future Oak Plantings in City Parks
- c. Ellinghausen Brine Study – Update (conducting phase 2 of study to be revisited in fall 2021)
- d. Community Gardens – Future Expansion/Partnerships with other Community Groups
- e. Rain Gardens
- f. Stormwater Runoff & Retention Management

8. ADJOURN: To a Regular Meeting Thursday, October 7, 2021

Motion by L. Kacmar, second S. Wenzel, to adjourn this regular meeting of the Environmental Commission. Ayes: E. Ellinghausen, L. Kacmar, M. Schneemann., S. Wenzel and Chair E. Poremba. Nays: None. Absentees: none. Abstentions: None. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 6:42 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Jane Howie

Executive Assistant/Chief Deputy City Clerk